

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 7NEW YORK DAILY NEWS  
1 June 1983

STAT

# Bo Gritz is back hunting for PWs

STAT

Bangkok (UPI)—Former Green Beret James (Bo) Gritz has slipped back into Thailand to resume his search for American PWs he believes are still held captive in Communist Laos, a Thai immigration official said yesterday.

Gritz, 44, a retired lieutenant colonel who was highly decorated for Vietnam war service, arrived in Bangkok on May 13, said the official. Gritz' whereabouts were a closely guarded secret.

In a taped message to Bangkok's two English language newspapers, Gritz vowed to continue "Operation Lazarus," the code name of a covert mission to locate American servicemen who he claims have been held prisoner in Indochina since the end of the Vietnam war in 1975.

**THE MISSION**, involving at least two secret forays into Laos since late last year, has been condemned by the governments of Laos, Thailand and the United States.

But Gritz claimed in the message to the newspapers that he was

acting with official clearance. "I am not a vigilante," Gritz said. "I was asked by my government to do what I am doing, and I am doing it."

But he said "evil forces" were trying to discredit him and prevent his team from locating and freeing the American prisoners.

Gritz claimed to be working for a special intelligence group known as the ISA.

A U.S. Embassy official in Bangkok described Gritz' cross-border forays into Laos as "very unhelpful" to the government's efforts to determine whether American prisoners were being held in Indochina.

"I wish Gritz would use more orthodox methods," the official said.

Gritz and four other members of his team were given one-year suspended jail sentences March 11 after they were convicted of illegal possession of sophisticated radio equipment in the northeastern Thai town of Nakhon Phanom, just across the Mekong River from Laos.